

IO

ELEONORE STUMP

Augustine on free will

Introduction

There is an enormous scholarly literature on Augustine's account of free will, and it is remarkable for the range of views it contains. Historians of philosophy read Augustine on free will so variously that it is sometimes difficult to believe they are reading the same texts. John Rist says:

There is still no consensus of opinion on Augustine's view of each man's responsibility for his moral behaviour . . . There are those who attribute to Augustine the full-blown Calvinist position that each man has no say in his ultimate destiny . . . Other interpreters reject this view in varying degrees. They will not hold that for Augustine man's will is enslaved, or they would dispute about the sense in which it is enslaved and the sense in which it is free.¹

Rist is surely right here.

One might suppose that this divergence of views is less a difference of historical opinion about Augustine's account of the will and more a difference of philosophical opinion about the nature of free will. Some scholars, one might think, are bringing to bear on Augustine's texts a libertarian view of free will, and some a compatibilist view; and that is why some scholars think Augustine takes human beings to be free and others disagree. But this sensible explanation of diversity of scholarly interpretation of Augustine is mistaken. Even scholars who are careful to make explicit what they mean by "free will" still don't agree about the nature of Augustine's theory of free will.²

In my view, the confusing difference of interpretation in the literature arises at least in part because presenting Augustine's theory of free will adequately requires more philosophical complexity and nuance than scholars have generally brought to bear on his texts.

For this reason, I think it is important to look carefully, even if only briefly, at certain issues involving free will before turning to Augustine's texts themselves.

Compatibilism and libertarianism

Scholars examining Augustine's work often take their view of the possible philosophical positions as regards freedom of the will from contemporary philosophy, which typically recognizes only two major positions available to those who think human beings have free will and are at least sometimes responsible for their actions. The first is compatibilism, which supposes that the world can be causally determined and yet also contain free acts and acts for which an agent is morally responsible. The second is libertarianism. Libertarianism is usually taken to include at least these two claims:

(L1) an agent acts with free will, or is morally responsible for an act,³ only if the act is not causally determined by anything outside the agent;

and

(L2) an agent acts with free will, or is morally responsible for an act, only if he could have done otherwise.

Historical scholars familiar with contemporary philosophical discussions of free will thus tend to ask whether Augustine is a compatibilist or a libertarian.

In fact, however, these two positions don't exhaust the possibilities. That is because it is possible that an agent's free or morally responsible act A be indeterministic and yet that the agent have no alternative to doing A. (L1) doesn't entail (L2), because there are more ways to restrict an agent's alternatives for action than by something's causally determining the agent to do a particular action.⁴

So, in order to reject compatibilism and yet maintain that human beings have free will and are at least sometimes morally responsible for what they do, it isn't necessary to maintain both (L1) and (L2). A defender of human free will can reject both compatibilism and (L2). It isn't clear what to call such a position. It seems to me to be a species of libertarianism, although some philosophers may want to save the name "libertarianism" for the position which includes both (L1) and (L2). Because some short designation is helpful, I will call the position which accepts both (L1) and (L2) "common libertarianism," and I will call the other position, which rejects (L2) and compatibilism, "modified libertarianism." For present purposes, the salient point is just that there are three, and not only two, major positions available for defenders of human freedom and moral responsibility.

It is important to see this point, because it means that not everyone who denies that the ability to do otherwise is necessary for free will is thereby shown to be a compatibilist. It is possible to maintain that there can be no free act, no act for which an agent is morally responsible, in a world which is completely causally

determined, without also holding that any agent who does a free or morally responsible act could have done otherwise than he did. Someone who rejects compatibilism can maintain that it is possible for an agent to act with free will, indeterministically, when he could not have done otherwise. In order to know whether Augustine is a compatibilist, then, it is not enough to consider whether he rejects (L2). We need also to know whether he accepts or rejects (L1).

Finally, I have characterized the two species of libertarianism by some of their necessary conditions, but these are not also sufficient conditions. For my purposes here, it is not essential to characterize either species of libertarianism completely, but it will be helpful to specify one more condition for modified libertarianism. Modified libertarianism is at least similar to what is sometimes called “liberty of spontaneity,” the liberty an agent has when she acts spontaneously or on her own. For an agent to act on her own, however, she herself needs to be in control of her action; her act has to be produced only by her own intellect and will. So we can add this necessary condition for modified libertarianism:

- (L3) an agent acts with free will, or is morally responsible for an act, only if her own intellect and will⁵ are the sole ultimate source or first cause⁶ of her act.⁷

Hierarchical accounts of the will and freedom

Harry Frankfurt has been influential in focusing contemporary philosophical attention on the distinction between what he calls “second-order volitions” or “second-order desires” and “first-order volitions” or “first-order desires.”⁸ A volition is an effective desire, that is, a desire which is translated into action if nothing external to the will impedes it.⁹ A first-order volition is the will’s directing some faculty or bodily power to do something. A second-order volition, by contrast, is a will to will something. So, for example, a person determined to become a vegetarian may form a volition to will not to eat meat.¹⁰

Although the terminology here is new, the idea is old. It is a commonplace of medieval philosophy that the higher faculties of human beings are characterized by reflexivity. The intellect can understand itself; the memory can remember itself and its acts; and the will can command itself, as well as other parts of the willer. When the will commands itself, its act is second-order. Augustine is keenly aware of the fact that the will can command itself,¹¹ and he puzzles over the fact that the command is not always successful, that (to use the contemporary idiom) some second-order motions of the will remain at the level of desires rather than volitions.¹²

The fact that the will can command itself and resist its own commands means that the will can be divided against itself in various ways. The will can, of course, have conflicts on the first-order level, but there can also be conflicts between the

second-order and the first-order level. For example, one can have a first-order volition to eat veal now which is in conflict with one's second-order desire for a will that doesn't will to eat veal. People who violate the rules they have set for themselves or the reforms of their habits which they have resolved to undertake are commonly in such a condition.

Freedom and divisions in the will

The possibility of division in the will raises various issues as regards freedom of the will. For our purposes here, the most important is this. In cases where there is a conflict between first-order and second-order desires or volitions, does it matter to determinations of the willer's freedom how the conflict is resolved? Suppose, for example, that Smith wants very badly to reform and quit smoking; he wants to have a will that wills not to smoke. But this second-order desire on his part is in conflict with a very powerful first-order desire to smoke, and the conflict is often won by that first-order desire. So Smith wants to quit smoking, but he finds to his distress that he isn't giving up smoking altogether; on occasion, he still smokes. Now suppose that there is some science-fiction device that operates on the will and that can be employed to make the will will not to smoke. For the sake of simplicity, suppose too that the device is such that Smith can put it on or take it off any time he wants to do so. The device operates on the will with causal efficacy but only as long as it is, as it were, plugged in to the willer; and at any given time it is up to the willer whether or not the device is plugged in. Let it also be the case for purposes of the example that the world is not causally determined and that Smith's acts of will are indeterministic in ordinary circumstances. Now if Smith avails himself of that device and the device acts on him to bring it about that he wills not to smoke, does Smith act freely when he wills not to smoke?

Contrary to first appearances, the answer to this question is "yes" for either species of libertarianism.

Consider, to begin with, the condition in (L₂). The device operates only because Smith has willed to use it. If Smith had wanted not to use it, the device would not have operated; and if Smith ceases to want to use it, he can unplug it from himself. Whether or not the device operates is thus solely up to Smith. So although Smith cannot do otherwise than will not to smoke when the device operates, it is also true that Smith could have done otherwise than will not to smoke. He could have willed not to employ the device, and then he could have willed to smoke, just as he did before he employed the device. So Smith does have alternative possibilities, to will to smoke or to will not to smoke, and it is up to Smith which of the possibilities is actualized.

Similarly, the condition in (L₃) is not violated. It is true that Smith's will is

caused to be in a certain state by the device when it operates. But the device is caused to operate by certain acts of Smith's, and those acts have as their ultimate cause Smith's own intellect and will. So even though the device causes certain states in Smith's will, the *ultimate* cause of what Smith wills remains Smith's own intellect and will.

As I have formulated (L1), that condition is violated, however; and since (L1) is shared by both common and modified libertarianism, it seems as if Smith's act of will not to smoke should still count as unfree for libertarians of both sorts. But this is a counter-intuitive conclusion.

To see why, consider the cartoon character Popeye.¹³ Popeye is a lightweight without much bodily power; but if he eats spinach, he becomes possessed of superhuman strength. Suppose that Popeye's girlfriend Olive Oyl is chained to the tracks in the path of an oncoming train and that Popeye is unable to rescue her because he lacks the muscle power needed to break the chains. Popeye's inability to break the chains is causally determined by the state of his muscles; not breaking the chains is thus the only alternative open to Popeye in his lightweight state. Nonetheless, we think that Popeye's breaking the chains is in Popeye's control if Popeye has access to spinach. That is because it is up to Popeye whether or not he eats the spinach, and he *can* break the chains if he eats the spinach. Consequently, even when he is causally determined by the condition of his muscles not to break the chains, he is still free to break the chains because the condition of his muscles is in his control;¹⁴ and for this reason, he is morally responsible if he does not break the chains, provided that he has access to spinach.¹⁵

The case of Smith the smoker is analogous. For Smith, the device operates on the will and not on the muscles; and the inability in question for Smith – the inability to will to smoke – is one that Smith has *with* the use of the device. But the conclusion remains the same, namely that an agent who in one condition is causally determined to do what he does nonetheless is responsible for his act and has the ability to do otherwise because of his control over a device which alters his condition.¹⁶ And so it seems that if the case of Smith the smoker violates the condition in (L1), the condition ought to be reformulated, rather than letting the condition alter our intuitions about the case.

We can reformulate (L1) this way:

(L1') an agent acts with free will, or is morally responsible for an act, only if the act is not *ultimately* causally determined by anything outside the agent.

If we recast (L1) as (L1'), then nothing about the case involving Smith requires the violation of any condition for either species of libertarianism. Although when it operates, the device determines Smith's will to be in a certain state, the ultimate cause of the state of his will is not the device but only his own intellect

and will, so that his act isn't ultimately causally determined by anything outside himself. Furthermore, even though the device determines his act of will, Smith could have willed otherwise than he did and he is responsible for his causally determined act of will, because it is up to Smith whether or not the device determines his will.

It is also worth noting that if the original point of (L1) was the rejection of compatibilism, the compatibility of causal determinism and free will or moral responsibility is as effectively rejected by (L1') as by (L1). As far as the dispute with compatibilism goes, then, libertarianism has no reason to insist on (L1) instead of (L1').

Further complications

Now suppose that we add to the case of Smith the smoker the stipulation that, unless he employs the device, Smith is unable to form the first-order volition not to smoke. That is, suppose that Smith has a second-order desire for a will that wills not to smoke, but that *without the device* Smith's craving for cigarettes is irresistible, so that in the conflict between his second-order desire and the first-order desire for smoking, the first-order desire inevitably wins, and he forms a volition to smoke. When he forms a first-order volition to smoke, then, that volition is compelled or determined by the irresistible craving to smoke. In this condition, does Smith have libertarian freedom when he wills to smoke?

Here, as before, the answer is "yes." Although Smith's will is determined by his craving, he does have the device available to him, and he can use it if he wills to do so.¹⁷ He can act on his second-order desire for a will that wills not to smoke by availing himself of the device, which causes him to will not to smoke. In this sense, then, it is open to Smith not to smoke even if he has an otherwise irresistible craving to smoke. Consequently, although Smith's craving to smoke causes him to will to smoke, Smith can will otherwise than he does, and so he satisfies the condition in (L2). Because of the device, he can will to smoke or will not to smoke, and which will he forms is up to him. Whether he wills to smoke or wills not to smoke, Smith also meets the condition in (L1'). As I have presented the case, if Smith wills to smoke, it is because he has willed not to employ the device and to let his craving have its way; if he wills not to smoke, it is because he has willed to employ the device. Either way, the state of his will is ultimately determined by his own intellect and will, and consequently it isn't *ultimately* determined by anything outside Smith. So Smith meets the conditions for common and modified libertarianism whether he wills to smoke or wills to refrain.

It is important to see that this is the case even though Smith's first-order will is causally determined either way, either by the craving or by the device. Since the craving is under his control by virtue of the fact that the device is under his

control, his will can be caused by the device or by the craving, and it will nonetheless be true both that Smith can do otherwise than he does and that his own intellect and will are the ultimate causes of what he does.

Would it make any difference if we substituted a clever neuroscientist instead of a device in this case? That is, suppose that Smith is in control of his craving and his first-order volitions because there is a neuroscientist who, for one reason or another, can and will make Smith's first-order volitions what Smith wants them to be just when Smith wants him to do so. Would the results of the preceding discussion be any different with this substitution?¹⁸ I don't see any good reason for thinking so, as long as it remains true that it is ultimately up to Smith what the state of his will is.¹⁹

The results in this and the preceding sections make a significant difference to some of the main scholarly controversies over Augustine's account of free will, as I will show in what follows. In the end, however, one problem remains which these results alone are insufficient to solve. I will address that problem at the end of this essay and suggest one way to deal with it.

De libero arbitrio

It is a common scholarly opinion that Augustine's views on the nature of free will, and particularly on the relation of free will and grace, developed over the course of his writings, especially in consequence of his controversy with the Pelagians. Augustine's early views on the will's freedom are laid out in his treatise *De libero arbitrio*, and some scholars go so far as to suppose that Augustine later repudiated his views in that treatise.²⁰

It is certainly true that over the course of time Augustine developed his views on the relation of free will and grace, as he himself makes clear in some of his late writings. In *De dono perseverantiae*, for example, Augustine complains that he has as much right as anyone to grow and develop in his views and that he should not now be held to defending views he presented so much earlier in *De libero arbitrio*.²¹ But here the issue is not the nature of free will itself; the issue is the state and condition of infants. In *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, he confesses to an error about the will and grace in an earlier treatise,²² but what concerns him in this case is his exposition of a passage in Romans, and the error in question has to do with whether faith is a gift of God. As far as his account of free will in *De libero arbitrio* is concerned, what Augustine himself says in the *Retractationes* is just that his views of grace were undeveloped, not that his views of free will were wrong. On the contrary, in the *Retractationes* he asserts vigorously that the Pelagians are mistaken to think he ever held a view of free will like theirs, that is, a view of free will which makes the freedom of the will independent of divine grace.²³ On his own account, then, Augustine

does not repudiate his *basic* view of the freedom of the will in *De libero arbitrio* even during the Pelagian controversy. It is therefore worthwhile to look carefully at his theory of free will in that early treatise.

As Augustine reminds his readers in the *Retractationes*,²⁴ he claims in *De libero arbitrio* that anything good in a human person, including any goodness in the will, is a gift of God.²⁵ On his view in the *De libero arbitrio*, then, human beings are unable to form a good volition unless God produces it in them or co-operates in producing it.²⁶ Nonetheless, when they will to sin, according to Augustine they are culpable. It apparently follows that a person can be morally responsible for a sinful act of will even when it was not possible for her not to will to sin. It seems, then, that for Augustine in *De libero arbitrio* it is not requisite for moral responsibility that an agent have the ability to do otherwise.²⁷ I have put this conclusion in a hedged way, because some reasons will emerge for reconsidering it; but even with that reconsideration, this much remains true: for Augustine, a person who is unaided by grace cannot do otherwise than sin, and yet she is morally responsible for the sin she does.

On the other hand, in *De libero arbitrio* Augustine does apparently accept some version of the condition in (L1), so that he rejects compatibilism. For example, he insists that human beings would not be culpable if their will were constrained by any necessity or by their nature.²⁸ So Augustine rejects as unfree a causally determined will.

If (L1) entailed (L2), then it would be perplexing or worse to find Augustine rejecting (L2) and accepting (L1); but, as I explained above, (L1) doesn't entail (L2). It is possible for an agent to act indeterministically and yet not have alternative possibilities for action. There are more ways of limiting the alternatives for action to only one besides having something act on the will with causal necessity. Augustine's explanation of why a post-Fall human will cannot will the good without grace is not very developed, but all his attempts at explanation are in terms of what the will itself wants. So, for example, he says, "the mind becomes a slave of sinful desire only by its own will";²⁹ and elsewhere he says, "What remains is [the conclusion] that . . . nothing else makes the mind the ally of evil desire except its own will and free choice."³⁰ For a post-Fall human being, on Augustine's view, the alternatives for willing are limited not by causal necessity but by what the agent himself fervently wants.

Finally, Augustine's insistence that a will determined by nature or causal necessity is not a free will (in fact, is not a will at all, properly speaking), and certain other things he says about the nature of the will, strongly suggest that he accepts the condition in (L3). So, for example, he says, "There are two sources of sins, one from our own thought and one from the persuasion of someone else . . . and each is voluntary. For just as no one sins unwillingly by his own thought, so when he consents to someone persuading him to evil, he consents just by [his own] will."³¹

Elsewhere, when Augustine is trying to explain why post-Fall human beings do not will the good, his explanation is couched in terms of intellect and will as well. Post-Fall human beings are unable to do what is good, he says, either because they are ignorant of what the good is in a given case or because although they see the good and want to have a will that wills it, they find doing it too difficult.³² Augustine's main explanation for the culpable evil that post-Fall human beings will is both their ignorance and their difficulty in governing their own wills (that is, in making first-order volitions conform to good second-order desires). Here, too, then, intellect and will are picked out as the ultimate causes of acts for which agents are morally responsible.

In addition, when Augustine explains his view of the way in which the will functions, he ties it closely to the mind. A person who wills has to will something, he says, and unless this something were suggested by the bodily senses or arose in some way in the mind, the will wouldn't will it.³³

It looks, then, as if Augustine's position in *De libero arbitrio* is a modified libertarianism.

There is, however, a certain additional complexity to his position in this early treatise which is crucial to see, because it challenges this classification of his position.

In explaining the culpability of post-Fall human evil, Augustine takes a somewhat surprising stand. According to Augustine, neither ignorance of the good nor weakness of will is itself culpable. What post-Fall human beings are culpable for is not the corruption of their post-Fall nature but something very different:

There is everywhere present someone who in many ways, by means of creatures who serve him as lord, calls the man who is turned away [from him], teaches the man who believes, consoles the man who hopes, exhorts the man who loves, helps the man who strives, [and] hears the man who prays. And so it is not attributed to you as a fault that you lack knowledge unwillingly, but that you fail to seek the knowledge you do not have. And it is not attributed to you as a fault that you fail to bind up the parts [of yourself] which are wounded, but that you disdain him who is willing to heal them. These are your own sins. For no man has taken away from him the knowledge that it is beneficial to seek what it is not beneficial to lack knowledge of or [the knowledge] that [his] weakness should be confessed with humility. And so a man, seeking and confessing, will be aided by [God], who neither toils nor errs when he gives aid.³⁴

And elsewhere in the same treatise he says,

The soul is charged with guilt, not because by nature it lacks knowledge or is incapable, but because it did not make an effort to know and because it did not work adequately at acquiring the capability of doing well.³⁵

[The soul] does not know what it should do because it has not yet received [this knowledge]; but it will receive this too if it uses well what it has received. What it

has received is [the ability] to seek carefully and devotedly if it is willing [to do so]. [The soul] has also not yet received [the ability] to carry out immediately what it knows that it should do . . . so from this very difficulty the soul is prompted to plead with him who helps it to perfection.³⁶

Here Augustine is apparently thinking of God as always willing to give grace to any person who wants God to give it to him, either in the form of knowledge about what is to be done, or in the form of grace which strengthens the will in the good. For Augustine, therefore, it seems that God plays a role analogous to that of the device or the friendly neurosurgeon in the example involving Smith the smoker. I argued that Smith meets the conditions for both common and modified libertarianism given above by virtue of the fact that Smith's own (second-order) will is the ultimate cause of what Smith wills and that, even if Smith's will is causally determined, it remains true that Smith could have done otherwise than he does. Augustine's idea here looks very similar, except that God plays the role of the device or the neurosurgeon. A person who sins in ignorance is nonetheless culpable – not for the ignorance in which he sins but because the ignorance that results in his sin is his own fault. He didn't seek the knowledge he needed when he could have done so; if he had sought it, God would have given it to him. Similarly, a person who is unable to will the good on his own is nonetheless culpable for the evil he does, because he could have asked God to help his will; and if he had done so, God would have given him the help he needs to do the good.

So although for Augustine in *De libero arbitrio* it is true in one sense that a post-Fall human being is unable to will not to sin, in another sense it is false. A post-Fall human being is not able to bring his first-order volitions under the control of his good second-order desires, and in this sense he is unable to will not to sin. But his good second-order desire is enough to enable him to form the first-order volition to ask God to strengthen his will in good; and when he does, God gives him the strength of will he wants and needs. In this sense, even a post-Fall human being *is* able to will not to sin.

Since this is Augustine's position, it is not as clear as it first seemed that in *De libero arbitrio* Augustine rejects the condition in (L2). Consequently, it is possible to argue that his account of post-Fall free will in this treatise should be grouped with common, not modified, libertarianism. A further and much more important issue, which threatens the classification of Augustine's position as libertarian of any sort, depends on what Augustine has to say about good second-order desires, a matter which will be addressed below.

Augustine's theory of free will in his later works

Even in his later treatises, Augustine is insistent that post-Fall human beings have free will. Among other reasons for thinking so, he maintains that the

exhortations of scripture would be pointless unless human beings have free will.³⁷ So, for example, he says,

One must not think that free choice has been removed because [the Apostle] said, “It is God who works in you both to will and to do, of [his] good will.” Because if this were so, he would not have said above, “Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling.” For when it is commanded that they work, their free will is invoked.³⁸

In his controversy with the Pelagians, he emphasizes the point he made even in *De libero arbitrio*, that post-Fall human beings are unable to will not to sin unless their will is aided by grace; but he argues that God gives grace to the intellect and will of a person who desires it. By his grace God gave the law, so that people might know what they should do, and that, knowing it, they might ask God for help in doing it.³⁹

He also continues to maintain his earlier explanation of the post-Fall inability to will the good. It stems from ignorance and difficulty, but the remedy for ignorance and difficulty is readily available. In *De natura et gratia*, for example, he quotes *De libero arbitrio* and re-emphasizes the point he made there: ignorance and difficulty aren’t themselves culpable; what is culpable is just the failure to seek God’s help with them.⁴⁰

Many of the places scholars point to in support of their claim that Augustine is a compatibilist are in fact places where what is at issue is the governance of first-order volitions by good second-order desires. So, for example, Gerard O’Daly maintains that the “concept of a will that is morally determined represents Augustine’s mature thought on the subject”;⁴¹ and he cites *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 18.19–20.21 as a text in which Augustine maintains that the “causes of good and evil actions are twofold good and evil wills, determined in turn by grace or sin.”⁴² But in the immediately preceding text, when Augustine is explaining the difference between law and grace, he says that grace produces sweetness rather than fear, and that is why we pray to God “in your sweetness teach me your righteousness . . . so that I am not forced to be under the law as a slave out of fear of punishment but might have delight with a free love in the law.”⁴³ Here the person praying has a second-order desire that God might strengthen his first-order will in goodness; the determination of the will by grace works together with the human second-order desire for that grace. That is why Augustine goes on to say that in such a case the will is *helped* by grace.⁴⁴

Passages such as the one cited by O’Daly are thus not enough to show whether Augustine rejects even the condition in (L2), let alone whether he rejects the condition in (L1’). Augustine himself makes this point clearly in one of his rejoinders to the Pelagians. He cites a passage from Pelagius in which Pelagius accuses

Augustine of inconsistency. Certain words of Augustine's in *De libero arbitrio* commit him to accepting that human free will has the ability to do otherwise, Pelagius says, whereas now (Pelagius claims) Augustine is trying to argue against the Pelagians that human free will is unable not to will to sin. In response Augustine says:

I acknowledge it, these are my words [in *De libero arbitrio*]; but [Pelagius] might also find it appropriate to acknowledge all that was said previously [in *De libero arbitrio*]. In fact, the subject [there] is the grace of God, which aids us as a medicine through the mediator, and not the impossibility of righteousness. Whatever, then, may be the cause [of the state of the will], [unrighteousness] can be resisted. Plainly it can. For this is why we ask for help, when we say, "Do not bring us into temptation," and we would not plead for help if we believed that there was no way to resist it. It is possible to ward off sin, but by the aid of him who cannot be deceived.⁴⁵

Here Augustine agrees with Pelagius at least so far as to accept the claim that post-Fall human beings have the ability to will not to sin and so the ability to do otherwise – provided that we understand this ability in the right way, as analogous to the ability Smith the smoker has to will not to smoke when he has an irresistible craving to smoke and a device which will override that craving if Smith wills to employ it.

Whether Augustine would go so far as to suppose that the ability to do otherwise is essential to free will is not made clear by this passage. There are certainly passages in various treatises which imply that he would not. So, for example, in *De natura et gratia* he says that if we accepted this condition on free will, which he takes to be absurd, we would have to suppose that God is good of necessity since it is not open to him to will to sin.⁴⁶ And in *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum*, he says to his opponent, "if, as you say, only the possibility of willed good and willed evil is freedom, then God does not have freedom, since there is no possibility of sinning in him."⁴⁷

Whether Augustine's view of free will in *De libero arbitrio* constitutes common or modified libertarianism is open to question; but these passages indicate that at least in his later treatises he rejects the condition in (L₂). Furthermore, since he is willing to allow a free will to be determined by God at the first-order level in response to a second-order desire for God's doing so, he clearly accepts the condition in (L₁) only in the form it takes in (L₁'), if he continues to accept it at all in his treatises on the Pelagian controversy. Finally, he thinks that a person's intellect and will must be the source of what she does, as the remarks about the remedy for post-Fall evil make clear. So if Augustine in his later treatises does in fact accept (L₁'), his view of free will in his later period constitutes modified libertarianism.

Grace and faith

There is a real question whether Augustine accepts (L1') in his anti-Pelagian treatises; and if he doesn't, then since (L3) entails (L1'), he must reject (L3) also. In that case, his account of free will is not libertarianism of any sort. The question arises because of what Augustine says about the second-order volition which is a crucial component of justifying faith. He describes this second-order volition variously as an acceptance of grace, a desire for a righteous will, a desire that God make the will good, a will to believe, or even just as faith.⁴⁸ For the sake of brevity, I will refer to it as the will of faith, where "will" is to be understood as a second-order act of will or a second-order volition.

The particular nature of this act of will is not nearly as important for my purposes here as its origin. Where does this second-order volition come from? Is it also a gift of God's and caused only by divine grace? If it is, then the argument that Augustine's account of free will is libertarian appears to collapse like a house of cards. One can argue that the smoker Smith has libertarian free will even when his first-order will is causally determined either by an irresistible craving or by some device, as long as we can tell a story that makes it entirely up to Smith which of these determines his will. We can even attribute to Smith the ability to do otherwise when his first-order volition is causally determined – but only if control of the causal determination operating on his will is ultimately up to Smith. We would evaluate the case very differently if the story were that a paternalistic neurosurgeon took it on himself, without consultation with Smith, to cause Smith to have the second-order desire to quit smoking, so that the neurosurgeon and not Smith is responsible for Smith's decision to employ the device. In that case, control over Smith's will with regard to smoking would be vested in the neurosurgeon and not in Smith, and Smith's volitions to smoke or not to smoke wouldn't meet the conditions for being free and responsible on either modified or common libertarianism.

For theological as well as philosophical reasons, it certainly seems as if Augustine ought to deny that the will of faith is caused only by divine grace. If God causes this act of will, too, then a person's second-order volition for a good will is in God's control, not in the control of the willer. Furthermore, if God then responds to the second-order volition he has caused in a person and strengthens her first-order will in the good, the responsibility for this good also lies with God and not with her. And if God thus determines her will at the second-order as well as the first-order level, it is hard to see why her will should be thought of as free in any sense.⁴⁹ It is also difficult to ward off the conclusion that in this case God is responsible when a human will doesn't will the good since even the volition for a good will is in his control. Finally, on this position, it is hard to see why a good God wouldn't cause the will of faith in

everyone, so that everyone is saved. As Augustine himself says regarding the second-order will of faith, “this is the question: where does [the will of faith] come from? . . . If it comes to us as a gift of God’s, then why doesn’t it come to everyone, since God wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth?”⁵⁰

So there seems to be every reason for Augustine to reject the claim that the will of faith is a gift of God and caused by grace. There can be no doubt, however, that Augustine did in fact accept it. As he puts it in one place, “without grace men can do no good, in thought, will and love, or action.”⁵¹

Nonetheless, Augustine also wants to maintain that human beings have free will and are solely responsible for their sins and that God wills all human beings to be saved, even the sinful who are in fact not saved. His attitude is summed up well in *De spiritu et littera* where he argues at length that the will of faith is caused by grace. “Are we then doing away with free choice through grace?” he asks; and he answers with vehemence, “God forbid!” (“absit”).⁵²

There are texts where Augustine is plainly trying to make human beings at least a partial source of the will of faith. So, for example, in a famous passage in his sermons, cited later by Aquinas,⁵³ Augustine says, “He who made you without you does not justify you without you. And so he made you when you were unknowing; he justifies you when you are willing.”⁵⁴ As his views on grace develop, however, Augustine becomes increasingly insistent that the will of faith is a gift of God in the sense that God alone is the cause of it. So, for example, in *De gratia et libero arbitrio* he says, “When he begins, God operates [in us] that we might will, and he co-operates with those who are willing when he perfects [us] . . . And so he operates without us that we might will; but when we will, and will in such a way that we act, he co-operates with us.”⁵⁵

Augustine wants this theological position to be – somehow – compatible with the theory of free will he presented in his *De libero arbitrio*. In the *Retractationes*, when he is willing enough to retract earlier views of his and when his view of grace and faith has matured, he stands by his theory of free will in the early treatise. Rather than retracting his earlier theory of free will when he emphasizes the view that the will of faith comes from God, he struggles instead to find some way of reconciling the two. The main question for any evaluation of Augustine’s account of free will is, then, whether he can have both these positions. Is there after all some way in which even the will of faith can be caused by grace and yet ultimate control of the state of a human being’s will can be vested in that human being, rather than in God?

One attempt Augustine makes in some treatises to show that this is possible is to suggest that God offers this grace to everyone, but that it is open to human beings whether to reject it or accept it. So, for example, he says presciently:

[An objector] might reply that we have to be careful lest someone suppose that the sin which is committed by free choice is to be attributed to God, if in [the passage] where it is said, "What do you have which you did not receive?" the will by which we believe is taken to be a gift of God's . . . But to consent to the calling of God or to dissent from it belongs to the will itself . . . And this not only does not invalidate the saying, "For what do you have which you have not received?" it in fact confirms it. For the soul cannot receive and have these gifts . . . except by consenting. And so whatever it has and whatever it receives comes from God, but to receive and to have comes from the one receiving and having.⁵⁶

But Augustine doesn't develop this line, and in the end he appears to have dropped it, as he had to do. If there is nothing good in a human being which she has not received, and if the consent to receive God's grace is itself a good act of will, then that very consent also has to be a gift of God. And so sometimes Augustine takes the will of faith to be just the assent to grace itself. He says, "And so this grace, which is secretly given to human hearts by God's generosity, is rejected by no hard heart. On the contrary, it is given just in order first to take away the hardness of the heart."⁵⁷

Augustine also seems to try and then give up on a line which makes God's grace a matter of God's making the Gospel available, presenting people with good preachers, or even introducing thoughts into their minds so that they may come to hold certain beliefs, which will in turn prompt them to certain desires and volitions.⁵⁸ In this case, although God does all the work of bringing a person to belief, the human willer responds by believing, and the belief stimulates certain acts of will. The problem here is that Augustine himself takes believing to be thinking with assent.⁵⁹ And so the same problem as before arises: the assent to a belief, which is itself an act of will, must also be a gift of God if it is good.

In other places, Augustine espouses the somewhat different idea that God arranges the circumstances of our lives in such a way that we freely will to believe.⁶⁰ Here the idea seems to be that God knows what we would freely will in any given circumstances, that there are circumstances in which everyone (or at any rate many people who in the actual world die faithless) would freely accept faith, and that God is able to bring about those circumstances. So, for example, Augustine says, "For if he had willed to teach even those for whom the word of the Cross is foolishness so that they might come to Christ, without doubt even they would have come."⁶¹

The problem with this idea is that it makes it up to God entirely whether or not a person forms the will of faith. Although in such a case a human being forms this volition without being caused by God to form it, it remains true that ultimate control over that person's will is vested not in the human person herself but in God. Although God doesn't act on the will with causal determination, God ultimately controls what that human being wills because God knows what free

volitions will be produced in any given circumstances and he controls the circumstances. So here it is arguable both that the will of faith is a gift of God and that human beings have libertarian free will, but this position nonetheless constitutes a Pyrrhic victory for Augustine because it simply raises all the hard questions again in a different form. For example, if this view of God's relations to the will is right, then why doesn't God arrange the circumstances in such a way that everyone wills to believe? And why shouldn't we think God responsible for any human failure to will the good since God puts sinners in circumstances in which he knows they are not going to will the good?

In one treatise after another, Augustine grapples with the problem of making God the sole source of all goodness in the post-Fall human will without taking away from human beings control over their wills, so that God becomes responsible for the evil of the human will. In the end, Augustine makes it clear that he cannot solve this problem and that he knows it. For example, in one of his latest works, *De dono perseverantiae*, after he has argued hard that any good in a human will is God's gift, Augustine imagines an objector who wants to know why God saves those who have the will of faith and punishes the others, if it is only God's grace that causes anyone to have the will of faith. This is a question Augustine will not answer; "and if you ask me why [not]," he says, "I confess that it is because I haven't discovered what I should say."⁶²

It does not follow either that the problem of grace and faith is insoluble or that Augustine thought it was. On the contrary, even in the face of his own inability to find a solution, Augustine refused to give up either his conviction that grace is the sole source for the will of faith or his insistence that human beings have real free will – and there is no indication that he felt he had to abandon anything in his earlier exposition of freedom of the will to maintain this position. In *De dono perseverantiae*, for example, Augustine discusses his *De libero arbitrio* and his reflections on it in his *Retractationes*, and he takes back nothing of his early view. Instead, he concludes the Pelagians are wrong to think that if the will of faith comes from God alone, God would be unjust to punish those who don't have it. As for the question *why* God wouldn't be unjust and *why* God gives this grace to some and not to others, Augustine takes refuge in the claim that God's judgments are inscrutable to us.⁶³ Clearly, this is less than an optimally satisfactory conclusion.

A friendly suggestion

Augustine's difficulties would be solved if he could find a way to hold that human beings are able, on their own, to reject grace, without God's being ultimately responsible for their doing so. Suppose that God offers to every person the grace that produces the will of faith, but that it is open to a person to refuse that grace.

Then the will of faith would be a gift of God, but it would be up to a human person whether he had such a will or not. Augustine is kept from such a solution by his conviction that he would then also have to say that human persons have it in their own power to accept grace. His attitude, and his problem, are brought out well in his consideration of Jacob and Esau. Jacob was saved because God's grace produced the will of faith in him. But, then, what about Esau? Augustine says:

why was this mercy [of God's] withheld from Esau, so that he was not called in such a way that faith was inspired in him when called and, believing, he became merciful so that he might do good works? Was it perhaps because Esau was unwilling? But then Jacob believed because he willed it and God didn't give him faith, but Jacob prepared it for himself by willing and he had something [good] which he had not received.⁶⁴

In my view, the problem is insoluble for Augustine because he assumes, in the way illustrated by his treatment of the example of Jacob and Esau, that the will has only two positions available to it as regards volitions: assenting or rejecting. On this view, a person who does not assent to grace rejects it, and a person who does not reject grace assents to it. Therefore, if God is solely responsible for the good will of faith which assents to grace, then God is also solely responsible for those acts of will which reject grace; those are just the wills in which God has not produced assent to grace.

At least some thinkers in the later Middle Ages, however, supposed that there are more than two positions for the will as regards volitions. So, for example, Aquinas holds that the will can assent to something or reject it, but it can also simply do nothing at all. It can just be turned off.⁶⁵ Sometimes the will is determined to want some thing by the nature of the will's object, Aquinas says, but the exercise of the will – whether the will is turned off or not – is always in the power of the will itself.⁶⁶ Furthermore, in principle, the will can move directly from any one of these positions to another. That is, it can move from rejecting to quiescence, from quiescence to assenting, from assenting to rejecting, and so on.

If this view of the will is right, then there are at least three possibilities for the will as regards grace, and not just two: the will can assent to grace; it can refuse grace; or it can be quiescent. When it is quiescent, it doesn't refuse grace, but it doesn't accept it either. It is thus possible to hold that a human person has it in her power to refuse grace or to fail to refuse grace without also holding that she has it in her power to form the good act of will which is the assent to grace.

This view of the will allows us to tell a theological story that attributes any good human will to God's action on the will and yet permits human beings to be the ultimate source of their own volitions. I am not now claiming that this theology story is true, that it is a story Augustine believed, or even that it is a story he ought to have

believed. My point in presenting the theology story is only to show that Augustine's position as regards grace and free will is not hopeless; there is at least one way in which he can have all the things he wants to hold as regards grace and the will.

So suppose the following theology story to be the case. (1) God is constantly offering grace to every human being in such a way that if a person doesn't refuse that grace, she receives it and it produces in her the will of faith. (2) Normal adult human beings⁶⁷ in a post-Fall condition who are not converted or in the process of being converted refuse grace continually, even if they are not aware of doing so. (3) Ceasing to refuse grace is accompanied by an understanding that grace will follow and that grace would not follow if the refusal of grace were continued. (4) It is solely up to a human person whether or not she refuses grace.⁶⁸ A person who ceases to refuse grace in these circumstances is thus in some respects analogous to a person suffering an allergic reaction who actively refuses an injection of an antidote to the allergen, perhaps out of a hysterical fear of needles. Such a person might not be able to bring himself to will that the doctor give him the injection. If the doctor were asking him whether he would accept the injection, he might not be able to bring himself to say "yes," for example. But he might nonetheless be able to stop actively refusing the injection, knowing that if he ceases to refuse it, the doctor will press it on him. In this case, whether or not he receives the injection is in his control, even if it is also true that he cannot bring himself to answer "yes" to the doctor's request to give him the injection.

We can take claims (1)–(4) to be true, without having the dilemma Augustine thought he had in the case of Esau and Jacob, if we suppose that there are three, rather than two, positions available to the will as regards volitions. We can postulate that it was in Esau's power to reject grace without thereby being committed to supposing that Jacob had it in his power to accept grace. It can be the case that God alone causes in Jacob the acceptance of grace but that he causes it in Jacob because Jacob, unlike Esau, ceases to refuse grace. If the will can move directly from rejecting to quiescence, without first moving to acceptance, then Jacob has two alternatives for his will as regards grace, even if it is also true that it is not possible for his will on its own to accept grace.

On the theology story I have told, then, God gives grace to anyone who ceases actively refusing it, but these are not people who already assent to grace. They don't accept grace or reject it. Their wills were actively refusing grace, but then cease doing so, without moving all the way to accepting grace. Once their wills are quiescent, God acts on their wills in such a way as to move them to the acceptance of grace, which is the will of faith.

Consequently, on this theology story, the will of faith is a gift of God, but a human person's will is still ultimately in the control of that person, because it is up to her either to refuse grace or to fail to refuse grace, and God's giving of grace depends on what the will of a human person does.⁶⁹

Conclusion

If there are three possibilities for the will as regards volition and if Augustine had been willing to accept this view of the will as well as the theology story I told above, or any theology story like it which makes God's giving of grace responsive to a human person's will, he could maintain his opposition to the Pelagians and still hold that human beings have free will in one or another variety of libertarian free will. The will's simply failing to refuse grace is not yet a good state of will. Since the will of faith is a will for righteousness, a will which doesn't refuse grace but hasn't yet accepted it is a will which doesn't so much as will to will the good; and it seems reasonable to deny that any will in this condition is in a good state.⁷⁰ On the other hand, if God gives grace only in response to a human willer's failing to refuse grace, then whether God gives grace or not will be up to the human willer alone.

Consequently, it is possible for Augustine to have his anti-Pelagian thesis and still maintain (L1') and (L3) even with regard to the second-order will of faith. It is also possible for him to hold (L2), provided the ability to do otherwise is understood in the latitudinarian way discussed above. Since a human willer can refuse grace or fail to refuse grace, a human willer has alternative possibilities available to her, even if God alone produces any good in her will. Furthermore, as I argued above, what Augustine says about the determination of a person's first-order will is compatible with the will's having libertarian freedom if the second-order will is within that person's control. On the theological story I have told here, then, a person can have libertarian freedom even if God determines her will at both the first- and the second-order level, provided only that it is up to her whether or not God acts on her will, so that her own intellect and will are the first and ultimate determiner of the final state of her will.

I think, then, that there is a stronger line of defense available to Augustine than he recognized. Whether he would have been happy to take it or not is not clear. If he is really wedded to the claims he sometimes makes, that God knows what a human being would freely will in any circumstances and that it is within God's power to produce or not produce those circumstances, then God is the ultimate controller (whether or not he is the ultimate cause) of the human will, and his giving of grace is not responsive to anything in the human will. In that case, I don't see how Augustine can suppose that his view of the will in the Pelagian controversy is already contained in his *De libero arbitrio*. On the contrary, unless Augustine is willing to accept that God's giving of grace is responsive to something in human beings, even if that something is not good or worthy of merit, I don't see how he can be saved from the imputation of theological determinism with all its infelicitous consequences.⁷¹

NOTES

- 1 Rist 1969a, 420. For representatives of different positions, see not only Rist's own interpretation in the paper cited, but also Clark 1958; Kirwan 1989. See also note 2.
- 2 For some idea of the diversity of views, see e.g. Craig 1984, 49; Chadwick 1983; O'Daly, 1989; Incandela 1994.
- 3 "Act" here, as well as in (L₂) and (L₃), is meant to refer to mental as well as bodily acts.
- 4 The quickest way to see that this is so is by considering what has come to be called "a Frankfurt-style counter-example" or "a Frankfurt story," after Harry Frankfurt, whose work (Frankfurt 1969) has called the importance of these cases to the attention of contemporary philosophers. David Widerker (1995a and b) has argued that in Frankfurt stories the victim must be causally determined, so that Frankfurt stories beg the question against libertarians. I argued against Widerker's position in Stump 1996a. There is also dispute in the literature over whether or not the victim in a Frankfurt story does after all have some sort of ability to do otherwise. John Martin Fischer has dubbed the ability to do otherwise at issue in this literature "a flicker of freedom." Fischer 1994, 134–140, discusses the controversy surrounding the flicker of freedom and supports the conclusion of Frankfurt stories. In Stump 1999 I argue that it is possible to construct a Frankfurt story in which there is no flicker of freedom.
- 5 Some philosophers are uncomfortable with the terms "intellect" and "will" because they suppose them to be part of some outmoded faculty psychology. But this unease is misplaced in my view. By talk of intellect and will here, I don't mean to suggest that there is a cognitive or conative faculty which is correlated with a single neurobiological structure or even a single neurobiological system. Whatever exactly a human intellect or a human will is, it is undoubtedly correlated with many subsystems which have to work together to yield the faculty or capacity in question. Vision seems to be like this. It is entirely appropriate to speak of the faculty of vision, but many different neural subsystems have to work together properly in order for a person to have the capacity to see. It may also be the case that some of the subsystems which constitute a faculty have multiple uses and function to constitute more than one faculty. This seems to be the case in vision, too.
- 6 By saying that the first cause of a person's act is her own intellect and will, I mean to leave open whether the cause is an act of intellect and will or just the faculties of intellect and will themselves, as seems to be the case in certain theories of agent causation.
- 7 In order to avoid having to employ the clumsy locution "ultimate source or first cause" throughout, in what follows I will speak just of first or ultimate causes in describing the condition in (L₃), but that locution should be understood as a shorthand for the disjunctive phrase spelled out here. Furthermore, there is a complication which I am leaving to one side here. Insofar as God is the creator of every created thing and insofar as any created cause is always dependent on the operation of divine causality, no created thing can ever be the sole cause of anything or the ultimate first cause of anything. What is at issue for Augustine on free will and grace, however, is whether God is also the cause of the will in some stronger sense than this. And so for the sake of simplicity in this paper, I am simply bracketing the operations of God as first cause and creator. I am grateful to Claudia Murphy for calling to my attention the need to spell out this point.

- 8 Frankfurt 1971.
- 9 For the sake of simplicity, in this paper I will treat “an act of will” as generally equivalent to “a volition,” “a will to O” as generally equivalent to “a volition to O,” and forms of the verb “to will to O” as generally equivalent to forms of the verb “to have (or, to form) a volition to O.”
- 10 Elsewhere I have discussed whether it is possible to have desires and volitions which are of a higher order (Stump 1988, 1996b).
- 11 James Wetzel (1992) has also called attention to the usefulness of Frankfurt’s thought for interpretations of Augustine’s account of free will.
- 12 Cf. e.g. *Confessions* 8.9. On this subject, see also Stark 1990.
- 13 I am grateful to three of the members of the St. Louis Autonomy Reading Group – Joel Anderson, Sigurdur Kristenson, and Thad Metz – for coming up with this example, which is philosophically useful even if it isn’t drawn from the classic works of literature.
- 14 What would have to be the case in order for it to be true that the condition of Popeye’s muscles was under his control is a question that is outside the scope of this paper. But perhaps this much can be said here. If Popeye can transform the condition of his muscles instantly by the consumption of a small amount of spinach, to which he has ready access, the condition of his muscles is under his control. On the other hand, if Popeye could transform the condition of his muscles by several years of training and weightlifting, for purposes of the rescue of Olive Oyl he does not have the condition of his muscles under his control.
- 15 Augustine uses an example involving vision which is similar to this one and designed to support the same conclusion; see *De nat. et gratia* 47.55.
- 16 For a point which is at least very similar, see Kane 1996, 60–78.
- 17 Someone might suppose that if the craving is genuinely irresistible, then Smith cannot will to use the device; but this supposition is mistaken. In the case of Smith the smoker, a second-order desire not to will to smoke is in conflict with a first-order desire to smoke. Now to say that the first-order desire is irresistible is just to say that the first-order desire always wins and is efficacious in producing action when it is pitted directly against the second-order desire. But it is not to say that the first-order desire wins no matter what, or that there is nothing at all that the agent can do to contravene it. The second-order desire may be efficacious in doing something *else* other than controlling the first-order desire; and that something else might be efficacious at least in preventing the first-order desire from being translated into action. A person who cannot control obsessive first-order desires, but who has a second-order desire for a different set of first-order desires, may avail herself of drugs or other help on the part of psychiatrists or counselors, and that help might be efficacious in bringing the obsessive desires under the control of the patient’s second-order desire even though the patient’s unaided second-order desire would not have been able to do so.
- 18 This is a question only about the conclusion of the discussion of the preceding case, namely, that Smith has libertarian freedom when he wills not to smoke. There are, of course, other, important differences between the case involving the device and the case involving the neurosurgeon. Perhaps the most important is that when it is the device, rather than the neurosurgeon, that acts on Smith’s will, Smith’s own intellect and will are the first cause in a straightforwardly causal chain that eventuates in Smith’s will not to smoke. But when the neurosurgeon acts on Smith’s will in response to Smith’s desire that he do so, things are more complicated. Smith’s own

intellect and will are the ultimate source of the chain of events resulting in Smith's will not to smoke. But the chain of events isn't straightforwardly causal. Smith's wanting the neurosurgeon to act on his will isn't itself a cause which determines the neurosurgeon to do so. Someone might worry that the neurosurgeon might exercise his own libertarian freedom and fail to respond to Smith's request for help, but we need not entertain this complication. We can build into the case that the neurosurgeon is constrained by something compatible with his acting freely to grant Smith the help he wants. As the Frankfurt stories show, it isn't hard to come up with such a constraint.

- 19 For a different evaluation of somewhat similar cases, see Kirwan 1989, 109–111. My reasons for disagreeing with Kirwan are implicit in the discussion of the case of Smith the smoker.
- 20 See e.g. Babcock 1988.
- 21 *De dono persever.* 12.30.
- 22 *De praed. sanct.* 3.7.
- 23 *Retract.* 1.9.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *De lib. arb.* 2.19.50.
- 26 Augustine makes this point explicitly and at length, *ibid.* 3.18.51.
- 27 In other treatises, it is clearer that Augustine rejects (L2), as I will explain below.
- 28 *De lib. arb.* 3.1.1. Elsewhere in the treatise, he argues that a free will's turning from a greater good to a lesser good is not done out of any necessity but of its own accord and voluntarily (*ibid.* 2.19.53). At 3.3.8, in response to an imaginary objector who thinks he can be caused to will something, Augustine argues that a caused will is no will at all. At 3.17.48–9, Augustine maintains that a sinful will wouldn't be the root of all evil if there were something else which was the cause of the will; he also argues there that no cause operates on the will to determine its states and that Evodius is therefore asking a confused question when he asks what the cause of an evil will is.
- 29 *Ibid.* 3.1.2.
- 30 *Ibid.* 1.11.21.
- 31 *Ibid.* 3.10.29. According to this passage, when someone does a morally culpable act, the ultimate cause of the act is the agent's own intellect and will, whether he has been persuaded by another or not. And even if he was persuaded by someone else, his own intellect and will remain the ultimate cause of his act. The attempts of A to persuade B to do something will have any force with B only if B accepts A's persuasions.
- 32 *De lib. arb.* 3.18.30–32.
- 33 *Ibid.* 3.25.75.
- 34 *Ibid.* 3.19.53.
- 35 *Ibid.* 3.22.64.
- 36 *Ibid.* 3.22.65.
- 37 *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 2.2.
- 38 *Ibid.* 9.21.
- 39 See e.g. *De nat. et gratia* 12.13. There are even places where Augustine applies this point to pre-Fall human beings: "Even if [Pelagius] were speaking about a whole and healthy human nature . . . what he says would not be correct, [namely], that not sinning depends only on us, as sinning depends on us. For even then there would be the help of God . . . which is prepared for those who are willing [to receive it]" (*De nat. et gratia* 48.56).

- 40 Ibid. 47.81.
- 41 O'Daly 1989, 88. For another example of the same sort of position, see Djuth 1990.
- 42 O'Daly 1989, 89.
- 43 *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali* 13.14.
- 44 Ibid. 14.15.
- 45 *De nat. et gratia* 67.80. See also *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 16.32, where he makes a similar point.
- 46 *De nat. et gratia* 46.54.
- 47 *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* 6.11.
- 48 For some discussion of the connection among these and other ways of describing the will of faith, see *De spir. et litt.* 32.56.
- 49 Even compatibilists, who maintain that an agent can be morally responsible for a causally determined act, generally hold that an agent is not morally responsible for an act if he is caused to do that act by another person.
- 50 *De spir. et litt.* 32.57.
- 51 *De corrept. et gratia* 2.3.
- 52 *De spir. et litt.* 30.52.
- 53 See e.g. *Summa theologiae* 1a11ae q.111 a.2 obj.2 and ad 2.
- 54 *Sermo* 169.11.13.
- 55 *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 17.33.
- 56 *De spir. et litt.* 34.60.
- 57 *De praed. sanct.* 8.13.
- 58 See e.g. *De spir. et litt.* 34.60; cf. also *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* 1.2.7.
- 59 See e.g. *De spir. et litt.* 30.54 and *De praed. sanct.* 2.5.
- 60 See e.g. *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* 1.2.13.
- 61 *De praed. sanct.* 8.14.
- 62 *De dono persever.* 8.18.
- 63 Ibid. 11.26–27; see also *De dono persever.* 8.16, where he takes the same line.
- 64 *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum* 1.2.10. Elsewhere Augustine takes a different line. For example, in *De correptione et gratia* he says, “If a person who is already regenerate and justified relapses by his will into an evil life, he is certainly not able to say, ‘I have not received [the gift of perseverance],’ because in his free choice for evil he let go of the grace of God which he had received” (*De corrept. et gratia* 6.9; cf. 7.11).
- Here Augustine is apparently willing to entertain the possibility that the will’s perseverance in good is produced in the will by God alone but that the will’s failure to persevere can be attributed to the willer. But he doesn’t explain how these claims can be compatible, and he doesn’t develop this line as a solution to the problem of grace and free will.
- 65 See e.g. *Summa theologiae* 1a11ae q.9 a.1.
- 66 See e.g. *ibid.* 1a11ae q.10 a.2.
- 67 Children and adult human beings in non-normal conditions pose special problems which complicate the case, and so I am simply leaving those cases to one side here.
- 68 By saying that it is solely up to her, I do not mean to rule out all the influences for good which Augustine sometimes also describes as grace, such as the influence of good preaching or good friends; I mean only that it is up to the human willer alone whether such good influences are persuasive with her, so that rejecting the influence of graces of this sort is possible for her.

- 69 I am presenting this position as one which allows Augustine to have both the apparently incompatible claims he wants, but I am not proposing this position as problem-free. For a more detailed discussion of the position, see Stump 1989.
- 70 It is true that a will which ceases to refuse grace is better than one that refuses grace, but comparatives don't presuppose positives; Smith can be taller than Jones without being tall.
- 71 I am grateful to William Alston, Joel Anderson, John Heil, Sigidur Krisstenson, Scott MacDonald, Colleen McCluskey, Al Mele, Thad Metz, Claudia Eisen Murphy, David Robb, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and audiences at Cornell University, Georgetown University, Davidson College, Wheaton College, and the University of Pennsylvania for helpful comments on an earlier draft.